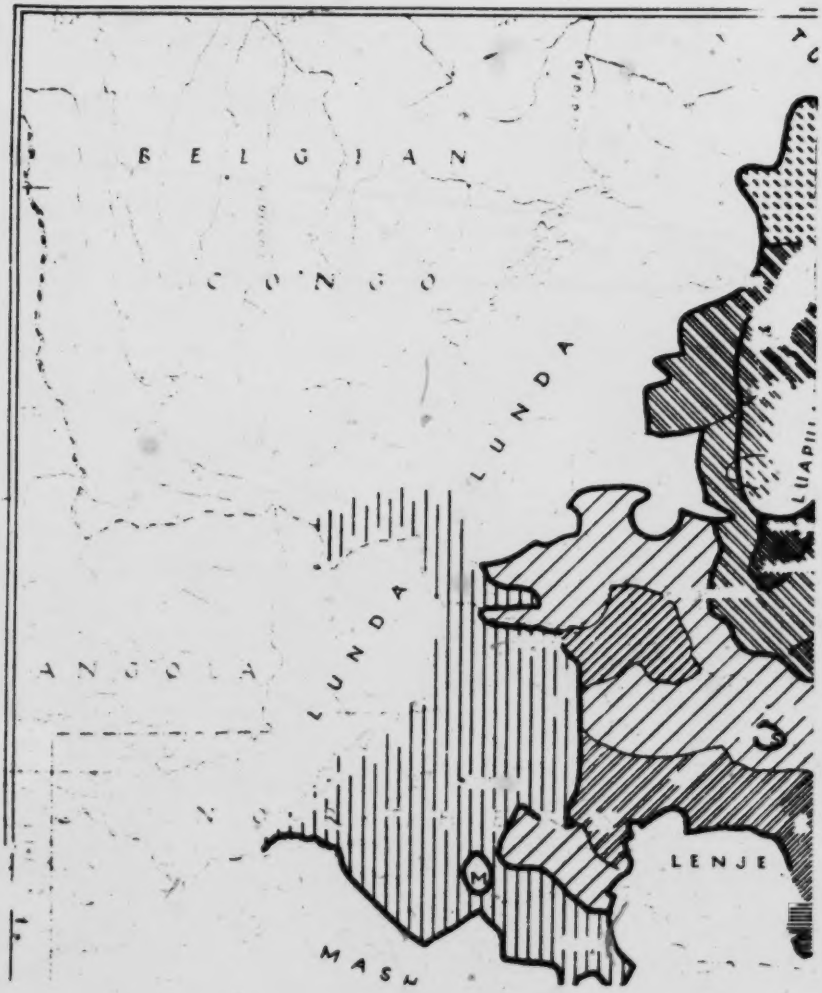
4: Whiteley E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

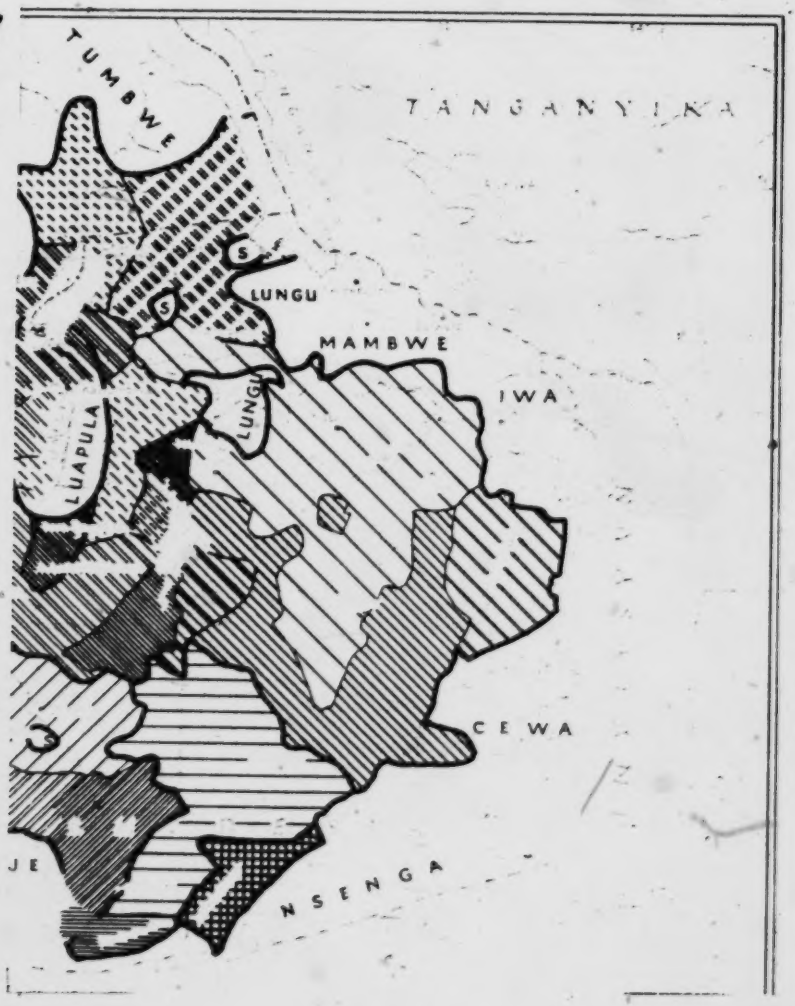
●619



[End map A]

4: Whiteley E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

619



[End map B]

131 towards the Luapula and, in several respects, markedly differing from the surrounding plateau country.

226 The abundance of fish in the Luapula, which is free from rapids and easily navigable below Johnston Falls near the mouth of the Luongo, makes fishing an important economic pursuit in which virtually all the adult male population participate and to which are attached elaborate ritual observances. (see below p.94) [439] Besides being an important item in the native diet, fish constitutes the chief trading asset of the country.

134 On the plateau, where soils are poorer and the population is almost exclusively dependent on agriculture for its livelihood, the shifting
241 *citemene* system of cultivation is the rule. In the valley, however, the rich alluvial deposits make possible a semi-permanent mound cultivation; this removes the necessity for changing village sites periodically and results in a greater stability. Cassava, of little account on the plateau, where finger millet and Kaffir corn predominate, is the staple food crop in the valley.

186 Common traditions accumulated over two centuries, during which the valley constituted the core of Kazembe's kingdom, have made the population conscious and proud of its past.

611 The patrilineal reckoning of descent introduced and established by the Lunda, as well as their tribal heterogeneity, mark the valley peoples off from the matrilineal and ethnically homogeneous neighbouring tribes: the Shila-Katya (north west), Shila (north), Lungu, Chishinga (east), Mukulo, Aushi (south), Lamba (south-west), and Lomotwa (west).

631 The Kazembe is now Paramount over the western (Northern Rhodesia) side of the valley, ruling directly in the province surrounding his capital. His kingdom is divided into eight chiefdoms, ruled by the following chiefs (from Lake Mweru southward): Kambwali, Kanyembo, Kazembe himself, Lukwesa, Lubunda, Kashiba, Mulundu, and Katuta. Sub-chiefs Muyembe and Kapesa administer two districts carved out of the metropolitan chiefdom but cannot hold courts. Lubunda, Mulundu, Katuta and Kapesa are of Chishinga extraction, the others are Lunda.

Kilwa island, with its Swahili chief Nshimba, now falls outside the Kazembe's kingdom.

TRIBAL MIXTURE

166 As a result of piecemeal settlement and frequent inter-marriage the component tribal groups are as a rule distributed over the whole territory.
619 Local concentrations occur nevertheless: the Shila and Tabwa predominate in the extreme north, the Lungu in the Mulele district, the Chishinga in the Mununshi valley. A Bemba colony occupies land between Lake Mofwe and Lake Mweru granted to Mwawamukupa in return for the assistance given by his brother Mwaba, a Bemba chief, in opposing the invading Bayeke and re-establishing the fugitive Kazembe. On Kilwa island the descendants of Swahili slavers and Nyamwezi copper traders live alongside the aboriginal Shila.

The bulk of the population is made up of the Shila, Lunda, Chishinga,

5:Slaski E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5
Luapula Peoples

Tabwa (Aitawa), Lungu, Bemba, and Aushi (including their off-shoots the Kawendi and Mukulo). In addition there are Bwile (Bwiri), Mambwe, Bisa, Ngumbo, Mukulu, Lala, Lamba, Lomotwa, Yeke (Nyamwezi) and Swahili elements. The presence of the Batembo pygmies, whom Maes and Boone(1) place just south of Lake Mweru on their tribal map of the region, is not confirmed by other authorities. The extent of tribal mixture is shown by the fact that the headmen of thirty-four villages in Kambwali's chiefdom belong to eleven different tribes. None of the tribes is indigenous to the valley.

The tribe, *mutundu* (pl. *mitundu*: the word is also used for a species of animal, bird or tree) or *mushyobo*, is not a descent group. Tribal allegiance, unlike clan affiliation, can be changed with residence. Though never in doubt about their clan, people may be uncertain as to their tribe. Inter-tribal differences in custom were never considerable. Neither physical type, form of settlement, nor language are now reliable indications of tribal origin. Certain characteristics are traditionally attributed to particular tribes: the Bemba are proverbially cruel, the Shila good fishermen and canoe-makers; the Tabwa are renowned as witches and for the beauty of their women,(2) the Lomotwa for their quarrelsomeness. In spite of territorial dispersion, members of a tribe consider themselves *lupwa luno*, "of one stock". The chiefs of neighbouring tribes occasionally visit their former subjects established in Kazembe's country.

The Lunda possessed a special status and constituted a sort of nobility to which distinguished outsiders - non-Lunda chiefs and headmen - could be admitted by being invested with Lundahood (*ubulunda*).

DEMOGRAPHY

No estimates are available for the population in the valley on the western (Belgian Congo) side. On the eastern side in Northern Rhodesia it was estimated by Coxhead at 32,000 in 1914.(3) He made no attempt, however, to distinguish between the various tribal groups, referring to all the subjects of the Kazembe as "the Lunda". According to more recent estimates the eastern population approaches 50,000 and shows signs of rapid expansion. It is now concentrated in some 300 villages strewn along the Luapula by the trunk road built on the hard land next to the riverside swamps. No figures are available to indicate variations in the density of population, which must be very high locally as many of the villages adjoin one another forming a continuous row of habitations along the side of the road.

Except for missionaries there are no resident Europeans in Kazembe's kingdom. On Nkuba's side a group of colonial officials and traders live at Kasenga.

Mobility has always been high and numbers have fluctuated widely as a result of migrations due to wars and to the popularity of individual chiefs.(4) A large proportion of the population is said to have left the country during the reign of Keleka, the fourth Kazembe, remembered for his atrocities.(5)

(1) Maes and Boone, 1935, p.135.
(2) Livingstone, 1874, I, p.259.
(3) Coxhead, 1914, p.64.
(4) Livingstone, op.cit., p.254.
(5) Livingstone, op.cit., p.265.

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

645 to perform the ritual functions that are necessary to the chief's state.[1]

Other advisory officials consist of the near relatives of the chief himself. These do not attend discussions as to succession to chieftainships, but are constantly informed of the progress of affairs. The paramount's mother and the Makassa (the eldest 'son of the chief') play an important part in this way. In the past senior members of the royal family seem to have intervened occasionally when some chief was behaving too outrageously, as, for instance, in the case of a sub-chief, Fyanifyani, apparently attacked by a sort of blood-lust. This man was removed from his office, according to history.

642 645 In brief, the Bemba system of government is not a democratic one in our sense of the word. The elder commoner has fewer rights to speak on tribal matters than have the Zulu, Swazi, or even some of the Sotho peoples. The affairs of the *icalo* are in the hands of a body of hereditary councillors whose offices and most of whose deliberations are secret. But I was impressed by the sense of tribal welfare which these *bakabilo* showed, and they were quite able to discuss and shrewdly adapt some old tribal precedent to modern conditions. Their strength, as regards tribal government at the present day, is their *esprit de corps* and sense of responsibility; their weakness, the fact that in the eyes of the people and the Government their function is mainly a ritual one.

VI. The Integration of the Tribe

● 619 The integration of the tribe depends chiefly on the sentiment of tribal cohesion and loyalty to the paramount, and the means by which the activities of the different districts are brought under one control in this widely dispersed group. The dogmas of kinship have been shown again and again to be the basis of tribal feeling and of the allegiance given to the territorial and paramount chiefs. In other Bantu tribes there is some tribe-wide organization such as the Nguni regiment system, that seems to act as an integrating force. There are also forms of public ceremonial at which all the adult men of the tribe are gathered, or all the warrior classes. The first-fruit ceremonies of the Swazi or of the Zulu in

[1] During 1934 I found the paramount living in grass huts. He was unable to build his new village because the *bakabilo*, indignant at his behaviour, refused to perform the foundation ceremony for the new community.

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

the old days are an example. The big tribal councils of most of the African peoples described as being attended by 'every one' and in reality very large meetings, must also act as occasions when the loyalty of the tribe is fostered. Among the Bemba much of the tribal ritual is secret, as has been shown, and the advisory council is composed of what might be called an aristocratic caste. If the *bakabilo* meet in sitting on the open ground in the capital, as I have seen happen, they use archaic language on purpose, so that the common people cannot understand. It is no occasion for high-flown oratory or any of the demagogue's arts. On the other hand, the Bemba chiefs were formerly considered very nearly divine, and the belief in their supernatural powers is still strong enough to integrate the tribe. The sacredness of the royal ceremonial largely depends on its secrecy and the fact that only persons of the right descent can take their part in the ritual. The ordinary people do not attend the ceremonies except in the case of some inhabitants of the capital, but they value their secret nature and speak contemptuously of the Bisa and neighbouring tribes with less complex rites. The number of the *bakabilo*, each scattered through the chief's *icalo* and each with his own ritual function, sometimes secret from his own fellows, also adds to the strength of the whole ceremonial system. Each is insistent that *his* part is absolutely essential to the welfare of the tribe, and his own village is convinced to that effect, too. Another integrating factor is the belief in royal descent and presence in the society of such a large number of men and women who claim chiefly rank. These are dispersed all over the country, generally in charge of villages, and they naturally support the chiefs from whom they derive their power.

As regards the activities of the different *ifyalo*, it has been seen that these are self-contained units and there is no regular provision for regular meetings of *icalo* heads. They are linked by the overlordship of the paramount, who acts as judge of their court of appeal, and the different tiny states are bound together because of the close relationship between their different chiefs. Messengers constantly go from one court to another to inquire after family matters, the children of one chief are sent to be brought up at the capital of another, the chiefs themselves take office first in one *icalo* and then another, and even the Citimukulu takes no important step, ritual or political, without consulting his 'brothers', the big territorial heads.